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Despite Personal Attacks Mrs. Nhu Merits Attention For Her Viet Nam Report

CPYRGHT

THE more Mrs. Ngo Dinh Nhu speaks in this country and the more she is harassed at her speaking engagements, the greater the service she may be performing for all Americans.

There are two bases for this supposition. First, the attractive Mrs. Nhu must perform draw more and more attention to the oddball war in South Viet Nam as she travels about this nation discussing the subject before audiences, attracting press and television coverage.

Secondly, the more Mrs. Nhu stresses the argument that the South Vietnamese government really is trying to cooperate with the United States in a live-bullet battle against Communists, the more she is subjected to demonstrations that have a definite Left Wing flavor. This alone should cause more than cursory suspicion, for the Left Wing line moves quickly and it is ruthless in hazing its antagonists.

That Mrs. Nhu is as controversial as she is attractive is quite evident. The fact that her own father, who was Viet Nam's ambassador to the United States until he resigned in protest to his government's policies, has publicly scolded his daughter for her political activities, does not add to her image in this country.

WERE generalizations in charging the press covering the Vietnamese situation with being slanted and active in international politics have made her persona non grata with much of the Washington press corps. And that hasn't helped.

Nor does the fact that she is an oriental woman with a sharp tongue who speaks, almost blurts, frank opinion, add warmth to her reception in this country.

Her "posture," to use a prevailing Washington cliche, was shown quite vividly on last Sunday's "Meet The Press" television program. The participating news people gave the ~~distortion~~ ^{Approved For Release 1999/09/07} they were attempting to pull Mrs. Nhu apart at the seams rather than search for the facts in what is ver-

aps the most muddled of the foreign affairs situation.

Although she is handicapped by not having a good command of English, Mrs. Nhu came through loud and clear when she stated, in so many words, that the United States government is so liberal it seems to be pro-Communist. Even at this distance, there appears to be merit in Mrs. Nhu's contention that her government is more anti-Communist than are the present Washington managers of the news.

CONSISTENTLY since her arrival at Paris, France, and in this country, where she received and continues to get more "live" coverage than in Saigon, Mrs. Nhu has hammered at the intrigue among Americans involved in the Viet Nam affair and their purported open efforts to unseat the Diem government.

Yet this does not appear to be a matter of abiding concern among the high echelon news pundits, nor among spokesmen for the federal agencies involved. The latter insist, instead, that there is neither any intramural conflict among Defense, Central Intelligence Agency and State Personnel in Saigon.

The fact remains, however, that the administration has found it necessary to replace the U.S. ambassador at Saigon, and the head of the CIA has been recalled from there. Surely these are symptoms indicating that something is wrong in that faraway place where American soldiers are getting killed in actual combat with Communist guerrillas.

If there is anything wrong, and we suspect there is plenty awry in Saigon and the rice paddies of Viet Nam, the American public has not been let in on the secret by President Kennedy and the two top officials he sent to Saigon to root into the mess, Defense Secretary McNamara and Dean Rusk, secretary of state.

IT MAKES good logic that active forces who are actually fighting communism will come under personal attack by the Communists, and by their fellow travelers and dupes.

A review of the liberal press in this country reveals that Mrs. Nhu was vigorously attacked long before she arrived in the United States and the comic strip characterization of "The Dragon Lady" was a useful device.

Whether Mrs. Nhu is the shrew and agitator as portrayed, is something that only time and the whole truth will reveal. But she should be given heed, for what she is saying, in effect, is that the State Department and other agencies are more intent in defeating her brother-in-law's government than they are in triumphing over Communists. And that is nothing new in Washington, where the line always appears to favor Leftists over Rightists for our friends.

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